

Charleston NCO wins Family Support Center award

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Team Charleston's Tech Sgt. Ken Fisher recently won the Air Mobility Command Outstanding Family Support Individual Award for 1999. Fisher is the Family Readiness Program manager at the Family Support Center.

Fisher won in the intermediate category for staff sergeant through technical sergeant or civilian GS-7 through GS-9. The award recognizes outstanding achievements and significant contributions in a family support center.

"I'm humbled - I don't feel I've done anything special to receive AMC-level recognition," said Fisher, who's been a staff member at the FSC for two-and-a-half years.

Fisher's nomination package outlines a long list of achievements in making life easier for deployed members and their families. Among them:

- Implemented a new FSC outreach program, significantly enhancing family readiness for 437th Airlift Wing units
- Personally contacted more than 200 families for Operations Desert Fox and Allied Force
- Enhanced the Hearts Apart family morale call program
- Piloted an effort providing unit-owned videophones to high-deployment squadrons, procured videophones for 12 units and freed up other phones, increasing accessibility and morale for families
- Organized numerous trips to local establishments for the Sip-N-Chat deployed spouses support group, which has greatly reduced stress among



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spouses and generated fellowship and camaraderie

- Conducted 100 percent follow-ups on family contact requests
- Kept parents actively involved with children's development while deployed
- Justified and executed \$20,000 in readiness materials and equipment to support families of deployed members
- Processed more than 1,400 military members for exercises/contingencies

Fisher was recognized for briefing the Secretary of Defense on family readiness issues. His briefing to the spouses of the Secretary of Defense and other Air Force leaders and was lauded by them as "the best we've heard."

As manager of the Family Readiness Program, Fisher handles deployment issues in three areas: deployment assistance, crisis intervention and providing assistance during mandatory evacuations and natural disasters, such as the Hurricane Floyd evacuation last year. Fisher kept in contact with the families of many deployed members and advised them on how to receive reimbursement when they returned.

"That was one of the biggest things for us last year - the assistance we provided during Hurricane Floyd," he said.

Other day-to-day assistance he helps provide for family members involve morale calls and

videophone calls to deployed members worldwide. The Sip N' Chat support group recently enjoyed an outing to a South Carolina Stingrays game. Upcoming trips include Charleston Landing and the Riverdogs Festival of Lights.

"We go on six trips a year," Fisher explained. "It gives the families an opportunity to get out and do something they probably otherwise wouldn't do, with the military member being deployed."

Other services provided to families of deployed members are a free car care program and a free child care program. The FSC recently received free phone calling cards from local Veterans of Foreign Wars groups and expects to receive more from the Air Force Aid Society, Fisher said.

"We get very positive feedback for what we do," he said. "We conduct a post-deployment survey and about 80 percent of them feel having these programs available for their families assists them in the deployment process tremendously."

Fisher pointed out that the FSC offers assistance for not only deployed members, but members in all facets of their career.

"I enjoy the interaction with the families and being able to assist them when a crisis arises and the military member is deployed," Fisher added.

Fisher's accomplishments and positive attitude have earned praise from members of the FSC as well.

"I'm very proud of Tech. Sgt. Fisher for winning this award," said Flora Hoss-Mason, director of the FSC. "He's the first person AMC has given this award to and they couldn't have picked anyone more deserving."

"Ken's accomplishments speak for themselves. He's built the Family Readiness Program from the ground up and clearly has made it the best in AMC. Not only is Ken a winner, but so are our families that reap the benefits of his efforts."